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A
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the Honourable

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

In the CHURCH of

St. Margaret, at Westminster.

JANUARY the 30th, 17²³₂₄.

Being the Anniversary of the Mar-
tyrdom of King CHARLES I.

By NATHANIEL HOUGH, D. D
Rector of St. George's Southwark.

L O N D O N:

Printed for J. STAGG, in Westminster-
Hall. MDCCXXIV.

MEMORANDUM

Veneris 31 die Januarii, 1723.

ORDERED, That the Thanks of this House be given to the Reverend Doctor Hough for the Sermon by him Preached before this House Yesterday at St. Margaret's Westminster; and that he be desired to Print the same; and that Mr. Ashe, Mr. Bowater Vernon, Mr. Scrope, and Mr. Hungerford, do acquaint him therewith.

Paul Fodrell,

Cl. Dom. Com.



Printed by J. Stace, in Westminster.
MDCCLXXIV.

we call to mind the Lord the Father
Day once brought upon the Kingdom
in the very same way which God has cho-

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SERMON

Preached before the Honourable
House of COMMONS.

ISAIAH LVIII. 6.
*Is not this the Fast that I have
chosen?*



WOULD to God the Characters
of a Religious Fast (which
are here recorded) were the
perpetual Attendants of the
present Solemnity, such, as the
undoing heavy Burthens, freeing the Oppressed,
and breaking every Yoke, &c. And yet when

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we call to mind the *Tokes*, the *Burthens*, the *Oppressions* which the *Calamity* of this Day once brought upon the Kingdom; Sure! if we can profit either by *History*, or by *Experience*, we shall keep this Fast in the very same way which God has *chosen*.

For if the Review of our Daily private Sins be a proper Exercise for a *Weekly* Fast, much more may Penitent Reflection upon such a Publick Sin, as Royal Murder, vindicate a *Tearly* One: A Fast, not to be kept up for *Strife* and *Debate*, *ver. 4.* for the maintaining of Quarrels, and the Increase of mutual Resentments; not to be Solemnized with *Sackcloth* and *Ashes*, *ver. 5.* with the Signs of superficial Sorrow, and a Shew of outside Penance: But rather amongst its right Observers, should it really produce the good Effects (mentioned *ver. 6, and 7*) of Charity, Justice and general Reformation. — Then, as it follows, *ver. 8.* Should our *Light break forth as the Morning*, and our *Health should spring forth speedily*.

'Tis now above Sixty Years, since this Fast found a Place in our Publick Liturgy. 'Tis above Seventy since the barbarous Fact was done, which was the unhappy
Oc.

Occasion of its Annual Appointment. Few, or none, it may be said, are now living, upon whom the Guilt of the Royal Blood can be laid. Can we, without giving ourselves the Lye, charge a Crime upon ourselves, in which we had not the least Hand, and which, from the first Moment we heard of it, we have always hated, and held in Detestation?

To this specious Plea of our personal Innocence, I fear that known severe Clause in the Second Commandment, may be a sufficient Check, *viz. That God often visits the Iniquities of the Fathers upon the Children unto the Third and Fourth Generation, i. e. in case the Children continue Impenitent, and are not sorry for their Fathers Faults*: Now if we were heartily sorry, how can we habitually slight the Observance of a Fast, which is joyntly ordered both by Church and State, as the most proper Method both of disowning the Guilt, and of removing the Punishment?

When the Day is commonly despised, (not to say contemptuously ridiculed) it looks as if we did not duly abhor the Enormous Action, but rather suffer ourselves to

to be seemingly involved in the Iniquity of our Ancestors.

Wherefore, if we have a just Concern for our Predecessors, our Selves, or our Posterity, we cannot, either in Piety or Prudence, neglect the most probable Means of averting the Divine Vistation.

Some, indeed, argue wrong, who, because the *Prerogative* has been once violently hurt, would plunge us henceforwards under *Arbitrary Power*, and give up our Laws and Liberties to mere Will and Pleasure. But Others argue worse, who presume from this shameful *Precedent*, to trample upon *Crowns*, and to trespass upon the *Regal Authority*, and consequently are solicitous to have the Solemnity repeated.

Whoever are so daringly officious, as to stickle openly for the Abrogation of the Day, can bear very little Regard for the Honour of his Majesty, or his Family, or for the Memory of his Great Uncle, *Charles the First*. Since the Queen of *Bohemia*, 'tis certain, regretted the Sufferings of her Royal Brother, to a degree equal to Her own. Never were Brother and Sister more alike in their Virtues! more alike

alike in their Distresses! The One was made an Exile, and Banished her Kingdom, purely for the Support of the Protestant Religion; The Other lost his Kingdoms, and his Life together, and was made a Martyr, giving a constant Testimony, Living and Dying, to the Reformed Church of England.

But this Preface may seem an Injury to this Honourable Audience, who want no Arguments to convince them, either of the Heinousness of the Fact, or the Expediency of the Fast: It were only to be wished, that such Rules were strictly followed, both in Confessing the one, and Celebrating the other, as might enable us with Comfort to answer the Question of the Text; *Is not this the Fast that I have chosen?* To satisfy which Enquiry, I beg leave,

First, To shew what those Uses and Purposes are, to which this our Mourning Assembling must be applied.

Secondly, To caution against some Abuses, and Misapplications, in the Observance of this Solemnity.

Having a due Respect to both these Rules, We may humbly hope, that what

We are doing at present, will be pleasing unto God.

The Uses of the Day are chiefly these Four.

I. To deprecate the Divine Vengeance, which may hereby hang over the Nation.

II. To take off the Stain and Scandal, which falls, by this means, upon the Protestant Name.

III. To warn us against the like Principles and Practices, which may probably produce the same fatal Events.

IV. To teach us, in all future Ages, a full and Loyal Obedience to our Sovereigns, reigning by Law.

The first Use of the Day, is, To deprecate the Divine Vengeance which may hereby hang over the Nation.

'Tis as difficult, as 'tis disagreeable, to represent this horrid Transaction: 'Twas so foul through the whole formal Progress, that tender Sorrow is much more becoming, than keen Satyr upon the ungrateful Remembrance. How high soever our Indignation

dignation may rise against a truly Terrible, though at the same Time a Theatrical *Court of Justice*! Yet, at this Distance of Years, Severity of Repentance is much preferable to Acrimony of Reflection: 'Tis better to aim at the Expiation of the Crime with our Tears, than at the Description with Gall and Venom.

It must be owned, That the History of the *Kingdom* appears too much like a Commentary upon the Iniquity of the Day: The immediate Confusions, and Distractions which ensued, together with all the ill Consequences of the Education of the *Royal Family* Abroad, point too *naturally* at the Source of National Guilt: And that we are not yet wholly free from *Popish Pretensions* may, perhaps, be a *judicial Punishment* for the cruel Treatment of such a *Pious Protestant Prince*!

Be this as it will, whether the Sin of *Forty Eight* be legible, or not, in succeeding Years, yet, as it was a wicked Parricide, and an unjust Outrage against a *Lawful, and Rightful Sovereign*, whose Life, at least, was Sacred, and his Person Inviolable; whose Concessions had been large enough to stifle Sedition, suppress Jealousy, and silence Complaint, long

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before either his Imprisonment, or his Suffering; It behoves us in general, to deprecate the Divine Displeasure upon this Score, however, we may fail of applying or interpreting it in particular Instances.

In what special Cases we have since smarted, through this deplorable Disaster, may be too Curious, or too Confident for us, Critically, to Determine: However, Humiliation is our wisest Course, till we may hope, with more Reason, that Heaven is reconciled. And where is the Difficulty of lamenting *one Day*, and of *every Day* detesting the *Fact*, if it may be the Means of *lengthening our Tranquility*, and of warding off many Miseries, both dreaded and deserved, from us and our Country?

The Second Use is, To take off the Stain and Scandal which falls, by this Means, upon the *Protestant Name*.

We are not ignorant (*Historians* of best Credit say it) that the *Emissaries of Rome* used their Intrigues in bringing King *Charles* to the fatal Scaffold. Many deluded People were played and managed in this dark Affair, by *Monks* and *Jesuits* behind the Curtain: Of which subtle Tribe,

Tribe, some list'd in the Army; others applied themselves to Trades, and manual Employments; and under these artificial Disguises, infused mischievous Impressions into the Populace, studying to render any Overtures of Peace impracticable.

When in the midst of the *King's* Straights, no Change could be wrought (for it was often attempted) upon his Conscience and Religion, then the *Romanists*, balk'd in their big Design, fell upon him with Hatred, forsook him with Rage, and left no Method of Fraud or Force untried to hasten his Ruin.

Let this be granted! Yet still professed *Protestants* (sad Blemishes to the Name!) were the visible Actors in this black Tragedy. And 'tis to little purpose to draw the *Pope* and his *Conclave* into the clandestine Part of the Blame, whilst those who shared the Publick Contrivance, were Men pretendedly Zealous for the *Reformation*.

But Oh! What a Wound was hereby given to the Honour of the *Reformation*, never to be healed, unless we pour into it the soft Balm of Sighs and Tears: Not

but a Scar must be hence left upon the *English* Reputation; yet Penitence is an effectual Medicine, both to cure the Malignity, and to close the Breach.

The *Mahometans* and *Papists* have ever since thrown this Accusation in our Teeth; with a confident Face indeed! Considering how many *Sultans* have been Strangled by *Turks*; how many *Emperors* have been Deposed and Murdered by *Popes*: However, as our Profession is pure and true, which theirs is neither, 'tis a Shame to let this single Instance stand in our *Annals* unretracted, or to pass in any Age unpented of.

Wherever the Poyson of the Report spreads itself against the *Protestant Profession*, this *Fast* goes along with it as a wholesome Antidote: And when they upbraid us Abroad, that we this Day killed our *King*, why! the very same Day which carries the Guilt, proclaims the Repentance.

The Third Use is, To warn us against the like Principles and Practices, which may probably produce the same pernicious Events.

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If Submission to *Higher Powers* be not Matter of Conscience, but of mere Humour, then the *Gospel* goes for nothing, and Government must have a very weak Foundation. How tottering must be the State of any Kingdom, if Disobedience be safe, when our own Turn is not served, or when we meet with any unexpected Slight or Disappointment?

'Tis to be feared, that many Troubles of this Unfortunate *Monarch*, took their Date from hence; from the Disaffection, I mean, of *Chief Men and Favourites*: For founding their Allegiance only on their Interest, and carrying Duty no farther than Advantage, no sooner did they miss of their ambitious Aims, than they turned short of their *Royal Master*: They indulged the popular Discontents to make their own Fortunes, and reduced the King to Hardships, that they might rise into Power.

Yet this single Cause neither, will not wholly account for this Calamitous Reign: It cannot be denied (even the Noble Historian being Voucher) but that the first Twelve Years produced many dangerous and ill-advised Attempts both against Religion and Law. We cast our Eyes, with Concern, upon various Oppressions
and

and Exactions, which were Yokes too heavy for Free-born *Subjects* to bear, and such as a Limited *Scepter* could not justly lay upon them. The *Romish* Faction, under *French* Influence, was too rampant, and such open and illegal Indulgences were granted to *Popery*, as might fairly warrant the Fears, and first Oppositions of well-meaning Men. Considering how terribly too far Resentments were carried afterwards upon these Provocations, one would desire almost, to draw a Veil over this dark *Scene*; yet 'tis not fit it should be intirely concealed, lest, in any future Reign, it should be once more acted, and appear again upon the *British* Theatre, to the Ruin of *Monarchy* and the *Nation*.

However, the ambitious Persons whom I have abovementioned, should be remembered for our *Ensamples*, that we *lust* not after Honours and Riches, as they also *lusted*. Neither should we *murmur* after the Disappointment, as they also *murmured*. For if Subjects, under the present Situation, are not content with safe Property, and the Protestant Religion; if the sure Possession of their Acquisitions and Estates will not please, without their own fancied Share in *Profits* and *Preferments*; What Thanks can be due to so thin an *Allegiance*!

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Supposed Slurs of this kind, strait beget secret Disgusts; secret Disgusts soon ripen into open Revolts: And if, at any Time, such Principles and Practices as these take the same Run, doubtless, they will risque us into the same Danger.

The Fourth and Last Use is, To teach us, in all future Ages, a Chearful and Loyal Obedience to our Sovereigns reigning by Law.

What a Mockery do we make of the Anniversary, if, whilst we disdain the Calumnies and Indignities cast upon one Good *King*, we can, without Reluctance, repeat the same against another! Especially if we have not the least Invasion of Law to complain of, nor any one Right infringed, either Religious or Civil?

Law is the very Life and Essence of the Constitution, investing the *King* with a just Title to Authority, and the Subject with a due Claim to Protection: So that as it was the Distinguishing Aggravation of the Afflictions of this *Injured Sovereign*, that they beset him after granting the *Petition of Right*, and giving in to every reasonable Request; Even so, if we are
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in good Earnest in bewailing his hard Usage, we shall remember never to renew it against any of his Protestant *Successors*, governing according to Law.

Loyalty is the Plain Lesson of this Solemnity, and with this very View, the *Day* bears a distinct Memorial in our *Calendar*, that it may direct us for ever in Dutiful Conduct, and deter us from the first *Dawnings* of Disobedience.

Those must needs joyn with an awkward Air in these *Publick Offices*, who can treat *Crowned Heads* with Indecency, or even allow themselves in the very worst Construction of all the Acts of their *Administration*.

For though if *Subjects* causelessly split into Parties, it can never be that *All* should be equally Easy; yet a *King*, whose established Maxim is to rule by Law, will infallibly please the *Best*, if not the *Most*: And the *Throne*, thus founded on *Righteousness*, cannot easily be shaken.

I proceed, Secondly, To give a few Cautions, against some Misapplications of the Solemnity, which I shall briefly mention

tion with all the Modesty that becomes me.

First, We must be cautious not to draw any Dangerous Parallel between our Blessed Saviour and this Royal Example. This is not said to detract in the least from the Courage and Constancy, from the Meekness, Patience, and great Charity of our Martyr'd Sovereign, for which we thank God in the Second Collect: But so it happening, that the 27th Chapter of *St. Matthew* was the Second Lesson, and the *King* observing it to his Attendant *Bishop Juxon*, and from the Reading of his Saviour's Sufferings, taking more Heart to support his own; hence some injudicious Writers have run such bold Comparisons between the Two Sufferers, and between the Wickedness of the *Jews* on the one hand, and of the *Regicides* on the other, as really border too nigh upon Blasphemy.

An Error which our Adversaries take greedy hold of, and triumph in at a mighty rate, not only at the Expence of *King Charles's Memory*, but even of *Christianity* itself.

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It is very true, That the *Blood* of *Christ* can only atone for *That* which was this day spilt; yet with *Horror* must we hear of any equal *Resemblance* between the *Effusion* of the one and the other: And could *King Charles* be sensible of this, He who forgave his *Murderers*, would not forgive such *Flatterers*: No, let us value the *Virtues* and excellent *Qualities* of the *Great Sufferer*, always keeping an infinite *Distance* between the *Saviour* and the *Saved*.

Secondly, We must be so discreet, as not to waste our *Zeal* to a wrong *Purpose*, when instead of abhorring the *Crime* itself, or of avoiding the least *Approaches* towards it, we profusely vent our *Wrath* against *Persons* who were wholly unconcerned, or if not so, are dead and gone, and must answer for themselves: Not but the immediate *Actors* must, and will, bear their own *Infamy*; But why should it fall upon *their Posterity*, who do not praise their *Doing*?

Doubtless, we pervert the *Institution* of the *Fast*, if, in lieu of *Solemn Mourning*, we fall out into *Sarcastical Reviling*; if, after rising from our *Knees*, whereon we have

have *humbly* confessed our Sins, and those of our Forefathers, we fall *angrily* forthwith upon dealing out uncharitable Censures against *Others*, who perhaps are as Innocent as *Ourselves*.

This *shows* a Fast with Two different Faces, and carries us into a flat Contradiction; it being impossible, in the *Nature* of Things, to be sincere Mourners, and bitter Railers in the same Breath. The *Transition* is strange, when from the Depth of Grief and Lamentation this Moment, we pass the very next to the Height of Censure and Invective.

Thirdly and Lastly, We must be very careful not to make this a Day of Discrimination, or Distinction, amongst the steady Members of the Church of England.

To the House of God we must *All* repair, and unanimously bewail this crying Sin of *Great Britain*, being grieved to the Heart that there is such an ill Thing to *accuse our Nation* of; for though not *One* in a *Thousand* did approve it at the very Time of its being done, yet as it was scandalously effected, by those who had got the Power of the *Nation* into their Hands, the Cruel Sentence passed Abroad, as if it

had been the Resolution of the whole Realm.

But 'tis not for us, so much to declaim furiously against past *Times* and *Persons*, as 'tis to shun partaking in their evil Deeds for the Time to come. We must not pride our selves upon this Occasion, for any extraordinary Degrees of *Resentment*, nor put our *Passions* into a fruitless Ferment, nor suspect our Neighbours as Persons *lukewarm*, and less Loyal than our selves; Because true *Loyalty* is not so much seen in Rage of *Passions*, or Rant of Words, or Reproach of Parties (Practices, perhaps, too much esteemed) as 'tis in calm Courage, firm Conduct, and peaceable Behaviour.

Whoever annually observe this Fast with sincere *Contrition*, cordially abide by the legal *Constitution*, and chearfully obey their Governors, whether *Spiritual* or *Temporal*, for Conscience-sake, can never be deemed bad *Churchmen*, or ill *Subjects*.

Happy! too Happy! almost would Great Britain be, if all its Inhabitants were an United Number of *Churchmen* and *Subjects* so disposed; to whom the Soundness of the Christian Faith should be as dear, as That of their own Bodily Health; the Succession in

in the *Protestant* Line as desireable, as *That* in their own Families; and the Preservation of our Excellent *Establisment* in Church and State as valuable, as *That* of their own Fortunes and Estates.

From the Guilt of this Day, that God would deliver us, and from all the Miseries, whether *natural* or *judicial* flowing from it, He grant of his Mercy; and to that End, make this such a Pious and Penitent Fast, as he has Chosen.

F I N I S.



in the Protestant Line as desirable, as that
in their own Families; and the Presby-
terians of our collection, in the same
line, as valuable, as the other
Protestant Ministers.

From the Quilt of the Year 1780, I have
found that the Ministers of the
Protestant Line, in the same
line, as valuable, as the other
Protestant Ministers.



